

SUMMARY OF INPUT DISCUSSION 2B—COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

What are the crucial elements of an effective statewide communications network?

- Defines its purpose and its audience.
- Builds on existing organizational linkages and resources (inventory to find existing links).
- Schools, churches, senior centers, libraries, councils and commissions
- Utilizes multiple strategies.
- Email, web sites, word of mouth, television, videoconference, teleconference, fax, radio, newspaper, regional meetings, newsletters, fliers, mailing lists, local gathering places.
- Uses marketing/education plan to show benefits to customers.
- Contains tracking systems of customers.
- Is easily accessible throughout the state and very user friendly (able to get into fast and quick).
- Utilizes key people in each region as local contacts, rural and urban.
- Allows for two-way communication.
- Is maintained by central coordinator.
- Sends out only high quality, accurate and unbiased information.
- Insures information is constantly updated.
- Conducts workshops at local and state level
- Is adequately funded for staffing and training of users
- Is maintained at local, state and national levels
- Uses phone connection that 1) is catchy and easy to remember; 2) honors confidentiality; 3) is toll free; and, 4) is compatible with other phone systems.
- Is absolutely consistent and reliable.
- Determines major dissemination areas—school, clinics, community centers, libraries.
- Creates an incentive system for participation.
- Becomes a central clearinghouse to coordinate all information.
- Celebrates successes.
- Conducts annual conference to update and share.
- Develops structure with “common language”—keeps language clear and easily understood by everyone. Uses short concise communications. Is multilingual.
- Understands that not everyone has access to computers.
- Gains commitment from all agencies and uses key communicator in each agency.
- Provides criteria for use of system.
- Provides print copy to libraries.
- Ensures material is culturally sensitive.
- Gains media cooperation.
- Uses youth coalition.

What are the existing efforts upon which to build a network?

Faith communities	State Department of Education	Kids Count	Children's Alliance mailings
Communication action agencies	TV/radio/newspaper advertising	Immunization registry	Hospitals
Pamphlets	Internet	Rural health studies	Spanish radio
Social service agencies	Infolink, Infonet	IREC	Workfirst kiosks
Billboards	Information in utility bills	FOCUS	Volunteers
Infant/toddler programs	Gas stations	Boys and girls clubs	HR directories
Libraries	US Census Bureau model for marketing/outreach	Referral service organizations	Newsletters
Local meetings, face-to-face	NICON	Idaho Children's Trust Fund	ICTF Regional Networks
CareLine	Ask a Nurse	RSVP	Brighter Futures
Coffeshops	United Way	Child care resources/referral	Madison County Community Council model
Hotlines	County, city and state web sites	Poison control center	Community Care in Nez Perce
Health fairs	Extension offices	Cover of phone book	Healthy Nampa Healthy Youth
Schools, high school, community colleges, universities	Tribal councils	PSAs—radio and TV	School counselors
Headstart		District DJC liaisons	City clerks' web sites
		Fund-raiser lists	Cooperative Extensions
		Grad students and volunteers	

What else is needed to create an effective network?

- Dedicated human and financial resources.
- Full participation.
- Identifying and promoting benefits to users.
- Control person to contact.
- Passion to respond at local and state levels.
- Community calendars.
- Engaging and involving local businesses.
- Utilizing local and statewide clubs and organizations.
- Finding community level networking and then networking community based networks.
- Communicating clearly within the organization—making sure it is two-way.
- Providing rewards and recognition.
- Having open discussion on specific issues.
- Not doing everything in Boise.
- Mainstreaming chat rooms.
- Establishing and communicating protocol.
- Utilizing Email lists.
- Providing leadership at state level.
- Deciding what system/organization to utilize to share information.
- Evaluating users and nonusers.
- Providing workshops and/or training.
- Encouraging other collaboration so people are more inclined to use resources.
- Standardizing approach.
- Ensuring system is bilingual and bicultural.
- Infrastructure-staff (web master).
- Developing strong marketing campaign.
- Ensure ongoing maintenance of database.
- Funding (public/private sponsorship).
- Meeting actual needs, not assumed needs.
- Determine agency to run program.
- Involving whole community—faith, education, business, youth.
- Reaching underserved.
- Respecting each contribution.
- Establishing realistic timelines.
- Conducting local and regional dialogue.
- Identifying services.
- Building on existing coalitions.
- Using someone at local level to feed information.
- Using compressed video.
- Contacting parents through public school, hospitals, direct advertising.
- Fostering cooperation and trust.
- Eliminating barriers between agencies.
- Using unconventional distribution outlets such as laundry, hairdressers.
- Having seed money available for local communities.
- Showing models to local communities.
- Providing cross training among agencies.
- Fostering collaboration between private sector and public sector.

What are the potential pitfalls?

Repetitiveness, duplication	Exclusions by intention/ screening	Purpose—what needs are really going to be met?	Level playing field for all involved
Not following through	Lack of quick response	Private agendas	Lack of trust
Overextending already burdened agencies	Lack of resources, or committing resources	Cultural and language barriers	Illiterate people need avenue to access information
Making it too complicated	Lack of ongoing technical support without adequate return	Leaving out local information	Information overload
Inadequate advertisement	Regulation of those “on the list”	Too many meetings without purpose and not enough action	Maintenance and consistency
Outdated information	Integrity/accuracy of data	Lack of time, money and resources	Too Boise-centered
Liability issues	Management of technology to make it useful	Failing to include private sector	Needs a comprehensive search engine
Individual egos—need win- win	Privacy issues	Continuous “starting over” with turnover of staff instead of moving forward	Lack of computer access to use and find information
Funding and how to manage change	May miss small grassroots rural areas	People not accessing	Tensions and suspicions between church and state
Censorship	Political realities	Lack of accountability	State funded agencies competing with private